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BITES
OF A
CHERRY

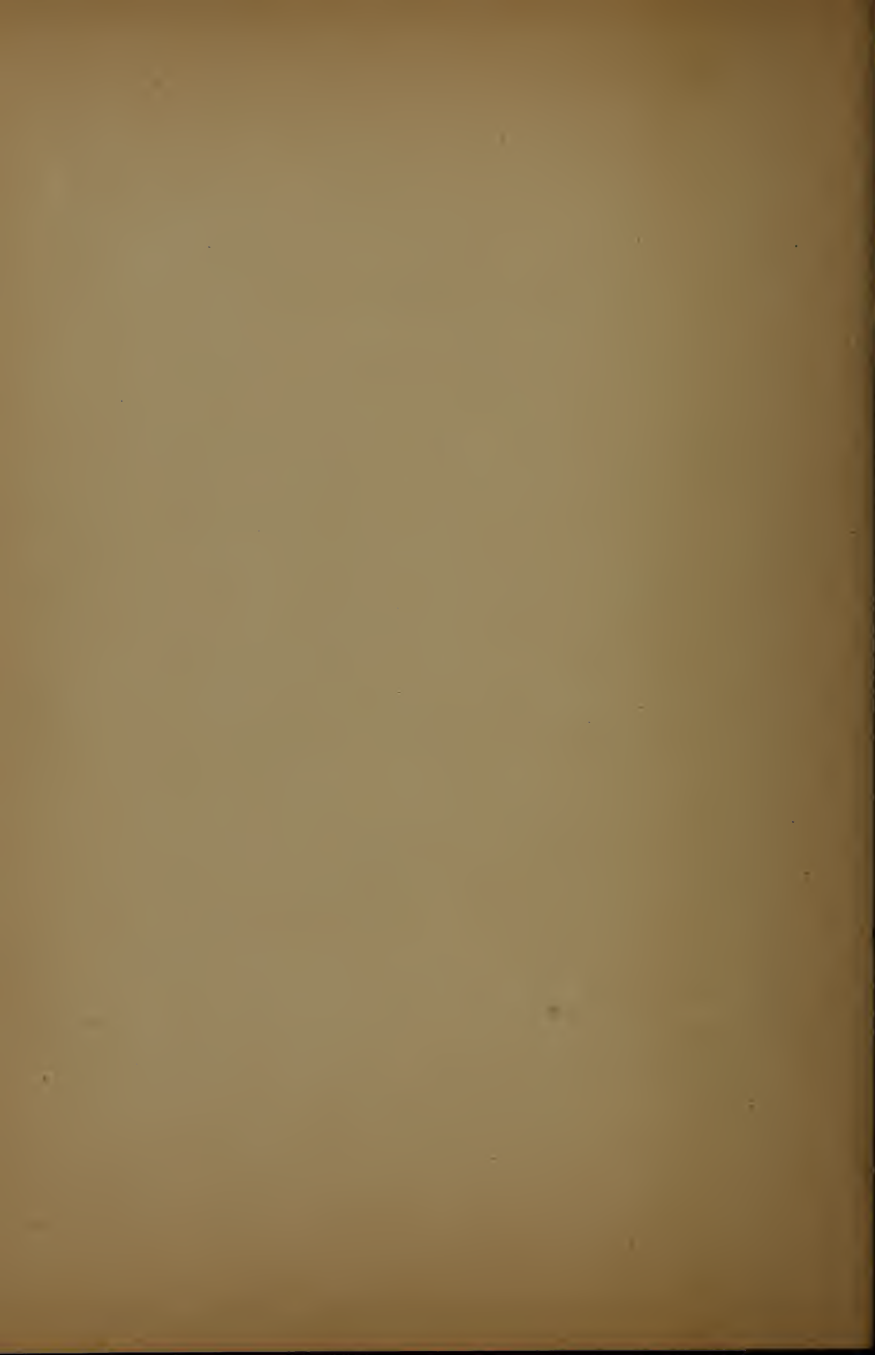
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M.E.W. 29 May 18

TO
MY FATHER.



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BITES OF A CHERRY.



A S L E E P.

MY little baby boy hath cried
Himself asleep at some light childish pain;
And on his face its traces still abide
Like shapes of cloud o'er meadow flying,—
Upon his cheek a tear-drop lying,
As on a leaf a single drop of rain:

See! as I bend above his face,
The shade of grief flies like the hurrying
cloud,
And like a flood of sunshine in its place,
The shadow yielding to the splendor,
A smile so sunny breaks and tender,
His soul seems speaking through it half aloud.

Say, what is passing in his sleep?
What are the dreams across his vision
driven?
Hath one, too young to sow, begun to reap?
Doth he, at one light grief repining,
The worthlessness of earth divining,
Already dream of sweeter things in heaven?

MINIATURE.

OH! look and see
The face of one who loveth me!
'Tis life! 'tis life! the lips will part;
The eyes already love me, and
Close to my heart
I press the picture with my hand.

Oh! can it be
That one so beautiful loves me?
That out of all the world of those
Who lay their hearts upon her shrine,
This goddess throws
Them every one aside for mine?

Yet, daily she
Gathers and brings sweet flowers for me,
And lets me read, far down her eyes,
Long dreamy tales of perfect bliss,
And drowns the sighs
Upon my lips beneath a kiss.

Why! she could bring
Down at her feet a lord, a king,
And yet on me, whom no one knows,
A very beggar boy, this dove
Her pity throws,
And crowns me only with her love.

Strange, one so grand,
With wealth and jewels in her hand,
With diamonds in her loving eyes,
And golden treasures in her hair,
Should sacrifice
Them all for me, as free as air!

And yet 'tis true:
I give my honest love, and you,
Dear soul, whom all the world adore,
Forego their praise, and only gi'e
The boundless store
And sweetness of your love to me!

WOOD NOTES.

UP from our dreams, ere break of day,
A score of miles, o'er hills away,
Far from the village shades we hie
To where the mountain waters lie.

O'er broken ways, through rock and wood,
By brook, by steep, by solitude,
By farm-house lone the cliff below,
Into the forest depths we go.
The birches line the path we thread ;
Their leaves are stirring overhead ;
Their green leaves dot the azure skies,

And lade the gentle air with sighs :
The moss yields softly to our tread,
And bird-notes burst, and wood-mates call
In wild and sudden-ringing cries
That with the echoes rise and fall,
Till, half-way up the mountain side,
Gleams through the trees the sheeny tide.

Here smiles the face of Abbot pond,
As if a god, with mighty wand,
The barren, rocky cliff had smit,
And drawn in ample flow from it
The waves that now before our eyes,
Touched by the summer's tenderest sighs,
In faintest ripples fall and rise.

Around its rim, the forest shade
In darkened lines of light is laid;
Above and imaged in its breast
The bald and lonely mountain crest,
The seat of storm, the ages' home,
Sublimely lifts its granite dome.

Thus, half in shadow, half in sheen,
Set like a gem, the waves are seen,
Raising like lips their little steeps
To kiss the breath that o'er them sweeps;—
Pierced by the springing trout that leaps

A moment to the air to break
A sudden circle in the lake, —
A circle widening toward the shore,
But waning dimmer, more and more,
Until exhausted in its reach,
It faints in silence on the beach.

'Twas here we came in sporting days :
Our roaring camp-fires, red with blaze,
Inflamed the night and lit the tide
With fans of firelight, flaring wide.
Here on the fallen trunks that sleep
Bent in the wave and half on shore, —
Here on the tonsured rocks that keep
The waters back that dash them o'er,
We lay at morn and lay at night,
And threw with exquisite delight,
The gold-flecked swimmers to the skies;
Yet half to pity turned, instead,
So still they lay with filming eyes,
With fading spots of blue and red,
Till gasping hard and fast for breath,
Tossing the yellow leaves, in vain
They struggled in the throes of death,
The living waters to regain.

Here, to the right, half up the steep,
Where beeches grow, and streamlets leap,

Where pathways overgrown repeat
Forgotten tales of former feet,
Here lived that dark old man, Scelest,
Who only loved the wood's repose
And her, — sole treasure he possessed, —
His brown-eyed daughter, Penserose.

How oft with her I strayed the shore,
And loved the hues the waters bore,
And listened to the wind that rose
And stirred a million leaves' repose !
At night, weary of mountain ways,
We saw, above the hills afar,
The gloam succeed the sunset's blaze ;
Whence burst anon the evening star
To gem with gold the August night,
And touch the wave with broken light.
The air from nooks and arches grim,
The open tree-trunks wandered through :
We saw the mountain top grow dim,
Fading and dark, mid falling dew ;
We saw the dark, rich mirror light
The ripples threw beneath the night,
And still we heard, in pulses low,
Their ceaseless beatings ebb and flow ;
We saw the clouds drive swiftly through
The starlit depths of faintest blue,
And heard the voices in the air,

That rise at night in forest deep,
And weird and pensive music bear,
To lull the senses into sleep.
We saw, upon the farther shore,
The fishers' fire its streamers fling,
And knew that there, as oft before,
Our village folk were revelling :
And oft we rose at middle night,
Across the water rowing light,
To share their frolic, or surprise
The sleepers from their heavy eyes.
And learn what faces known of old,
What maidens fair and gallants bold,
Had come so far, awhile to be
Amid the mountain scenery.

At morn, we saw the sun uprise
And fire the forest green anew
With every tint of verdant dyes,
Striking the mountain side with light,
While all below still grayer grew,
And woods and waves wore twilight hue,
Thus crowning day upon the night.
While all this sweet transition hour
A thousand warblers waked and sung
And drenched the branches with a shower
Of tuneful trills that interrung ;
The morn was brimmed with melody,

Until its countless purling rills
Through ether fell from sky to sea
And rippled down aerial hills,
And struck the dewy leaves and woke
As many echoes slumbering there,
Till the whole world in carol broke,
And myriad song-notes thrilled the air.

Anon, when blazed the midday hour,
We lay on moss in sylvan bower,
Where limpid springs had cooling flow
The leaves and fallen trunks below ;
Or climbed the mountain side to rest,
Fanned by the wind that swept its crest.
Alone, upon the bald, bold height,
Far off on every side saw we
The landscape rolling like the sea
And misty in the noon-day light.
We saw the hills with beeches crowned,
The vales where sinuous rivers wound,
The pond below, inlaid in green,
With spots of shade, and spots of sheen
The breezes, loving *Penserose*,
Let loose her brown hair from repose,
And made me love her and adore ;
For *Penserose* more winning grew,
As beautiful as skies of blue,
One to be loved forevermore.

And always beautiful and fair,
The sweetest face, the gentlest air,
She yet was not so fair as sweet,—
That brown and pensive loveliness,
Where shades of melancholy fleet,
And sad eyes sadder heart confess.

Ah ! now I know why Penseros
Breathed such sweet sadness in her sighs;
Why less of glory than repose,
Lay in the heaven of her eyes !
Ah ! now I know too well why she
Did cling so tenderly to me.

CROW POINT.

HOW sweet the day ! E'en as a mise
wakes
At times under the touch of pity's hand
And gives profusely from his hoarded stores,
His face as tender as a mother's smile
Ere yet his greed encase it o'er again,
So now the bleak November opes its heart
And pours o'er all the earth and sky the soft
And melting haze of August, and we walk
Through fields again, and sit upon the rocks;
And to the dreams, in which this Sabbath day
The whole world seems to sleep, we also yield,

And to our sensuous hearts draw in the deep
And blessed influence of the scene. Afar
The blue hills fade, and veil their ragged tops
Beneath the light that softens them; the bare
Brown fields flush almost into beauty, as
The face of age doth sometimes catch again
The beauty of its youth; the fir-trees fringe
The landscape with immortal hues of green;
Across the outspread meadow-lands appear
The furrows of the earth just ploughed and fresh
With all the fragrance of the new turned sod;
The sheep, that herded closer when we came,
Stand picturesquely grouped upon the ledge
And scan us with grave eyes; the cattle love
The sun, and saunter, feeding here and there,
Unconscious that they grace the hillsides now
As when the Hebrew poet in his song
Sang of the cattle on a thousand hills;
Out of the hazy light, e'en as we gaze,
Grow on our eyes the Quincy spires far off;
The Weymouth village roofs break through the
air,
And masts of ships at anchor, and, anon,
The outlines dim of nestling cottages;
Sweet church bells, softened by the distance,
strike;
And children's voices come, we know not
whence,

And from the turnpike bridge the thud of hoofs;
Eastward, incessant roars the rolling surf,
And just below us flocks of ducks alight
Upon the water gabbling as they swim;
The islands in the harbor lie asleep,
Unwaked, so still the surface of the sea,
So slumberous the drowsy atmosphere.
A rift of inky cloud, its edge defined
As with a pencil, rests high up the sky
And finds its shadow in the wave below;
Elsewhere so faint the light's gradations, that
The sky and sea upon the horizon meet,
And mingle into one. Low in the west,
E'en as we look, the misty veil is rent,
And in a single opening, silver lined,
The sun half lifts its heavy eyelid, and,
All else still shrouded in the haze,
Its rays fall only on the fortress walls,
And on the sails of schooners gliding past,
Illuming them with light so soft and rare,
So delicately fading on the deep,
That artist's pencil ne'er can copy them;
And we gaze, thinking such a sight will ne'er
Be ours again to see. O Sabbath day!
What sermons fall upon us from your skies!
And what a song of praise is this sweet chord
That wakes in both our hearts and answers
back

To all the mingled sights and sounds that
make

The perfect influence of this matchless hour !
Sweet friend, are there no longings in your
heart,

No deeper current than the child's by-gones
That wake the memory, but minister
Naught to your needs, no nurture to your soul?
Let us walk on: the clouds grow dim, and faints
The last tinge left them by the setting sun.
The village, with its belfry and its elms,
Its wharves and slopes and houses on the hill,
Seen from the rustic railing of the bridge
On which we linger as we pass, doth seem
Like some New England painter's work, who
paints,

Pent up in town, his dear old village home.
Farewell ! the night sinks down, the rain drops
fall;

November shuts her heart again, and I,
Bleaker than e'er November, cannot break
E'en momentarily the clouds that make my heart
Hide in its narrowness of reticence,—
For years taught duty by relentless fate,
Dumb most to those for whom it quickest beats.

E S C A P E.

LAST night, I had the saddest dream !—
That I at length my troth had plighted;
That I, with one I much esteem,
My fortunes had united.

At twenty-two — a fraction more —
Much as the thought my heart has harried,
really never dreamed before
That I was loved or married.

There was no ceremony made, —
Our dreams, you see, are much capri-
cious, —
No clerk — no wedding marches played —
No nuptial kiss, delicious.

But we were married all at once :
I could not tell when I consented;
I know I thought myself a dunce,
And heartily repented.

There was chagrin to find my heart
Had got itself so far entangled ;
And yet I knew I had no part
In letting it be mangled.

'Twas very plain that some mistake
Had interfered with my gyrations ;
'Twas quite as plain I couldn't shake
Aside the new relations.

And yet it was a pleasant eye,
Soft, love-lit, dark, and melancholy,
That made me half repent that I
Accused myself of folly.

A tender face, more sad than gay, —
It long before was wont to cheer me, —
Without my thinking, I may say,
'Twould ever come so near me.

Why, I had known her years and years,
And loved her more than I can utter,
But not in sighs and fears and tears,
In ecstasy and flutter.

And, what was worse, I knew that she
Did feel no more, but just as I did ;
Who, then, could solve the mystery ?
What god our fate had guided !

I did not like to say outright
The discontent I labored under ;
Besides, deplore the matter as I might,
I couldn't mend the blunder.

And when I waked, I scarce believed
A dream so vivid was unfounded,
Till, all my ribs felt, I perceived
My terror was ungrounded.

I'm half ashamed to say what glee
I feel to find my heart still single,
What sweet relief and liberty
Through all my senses tingle.

Like caged bird, let loose in air,
Joying to spread and use his feathers,
While I'm awake, I'll have a care
And shun the nuptial tethers.

THE DEAD LEAVES.

THE sere leaves are lying
Strewn on the ground,
Fading and dying,
Creating a sound
That maketh one sober,
As eddyng round
They flutter and fly
And rustle and sigh
In the winds of October.

They are brittle and old,
 With no longer the hues
Of radiant gold
And orange and red,
 That shone in the dews —
 The sun-stricken dews,
In whose lustre the red
The gold and the red
 Grew diamond bright,
 And reflected the light,
 The breaking daylight
In sparkles of light ;—
 With no longer the hues
That everywhere spread,
Such a glory of red
 And orange and gold
 On hill-top and wold,
On the slope and the side,
From the foot to the head,
 Of the mountains anigh,
As far and as wide
 As the out-looking eye,
Afar and anigh
 Had power to behold !
As if in the night
 A billow of gold
 Had flamingly rolled
 The wilderness o'er

And left in its trace
The magnificent light
Of the colors it bore
To enrich the whole face
Of the earth with a store
Of measureless gold.
They are fallen and dead,
And the fulness and strength
Of their beauty are fled,
And, wasted at length,
And withered and thin,
Their delicate frames
Already begin
To be painfully plain,
Like a man, when the flames
Of fever and pain
Have hollowed his face
And tightened the skin,
And discovered the trace
Of the bones of his face.

As fast as they fall,
At the master's command,
I gather them all,
And with pitiful hand
Keep heaping them in
My arms to my chin;
And I lovingly bear

Them in from the storms ;
And a feeling of kin
And a merciful care
Come into my breast
For the leaves that I bear,
And I clasp to my breast
Their delicate forms,
Their withering forms,
As mothers have pressed
Their babes to the breast
In pitiless storms.

For I think they were born
In the dewy spring-morn,
Grew verdant and fair,
And sighed in the air
Of the summer gone by ;
Were kissed by the sigh
Of the winds and the air ;
Have lived as I live,
Have loved as I love,
Ever ready to give
Their shade to my rest,
And, spreading above
Me, to shadow my breast
And lull me to rest ;
By day and by night
Have sheltered me well

And waked in my breast
A mystic delight,
And seduced me to tell,
With a lover's delight,
To their mischievous ears
My dreams and my sighs
My hopes and my fears
And my ladye's replies.

I remember their life
Was akin to the days
When odors were rife —
The odor of flowers
From numberless bowers
Of leaves and of flowers ;
When voluptuous haze
Did wrap in a maze
The mountain tops round ;
When I lay on the ground,
Down under the trees,
And heard the dear breeze
With a slumberous sound
Going into the trees ;
When I ever did grieve,
And could hardly believe,
That the leaves of the trees,
And the slumberous breeze,

And the mystical haze
Of the long summer days,
And the spirit of rest
That came out of the air
And into my breast,
Seducing the heart
In my indolent breast,
Would ever depart
And leave me aware
That beauty and bloom
But little while stay,
But forever give way
To sorrow and gloom.

They lived and are dying ;
And now, in October,
They deem me so sober,
So really dying,
That I fancy them sighing
Over the past ;
They sigh that at last,
After all the sweet phase
Of the long summer days,
The end is but death,
And that life at the best
Is a trial and test
And only a breath.

And almost I see
Them looking at me
 With sorrowful faces,
As, day after day,
I bear them away
And carefully lay
 Them in burial places.

I throw them away —
 Reminders no more
Of the beautiful day
 When the summer winds bore
Their kisses away.
 They are gone, and the chill
Of winter is nigh,
And October doth fill
 The air with a sigh
And my heart with a sigh :
And with them the eyes
Of a ladye I prize
 Have gone and have ta'en
My heart from my breast ;
 And again and again
I wish the dear eyes
 Would come hither again,
Would look out of the skies
And restore to my breast
Its summer-time rest.

To-morrow, the moan
 Of the wind and the rain,
 As they come and complain
In their dimmallest tone,
 Will a requiem sing
O'er the leaves that were born
 In the beautiful spring,
 That budded and grew,
 The sweet summer through,
 And died in October
 And left the world sober
And sere and forlorn.

The branches and boughs,
 Standing up in the air,
 Like mourners are left
 Alone and bereft,
Forsaken and bare ;
 And never relief
 Will come to their grief
Till the spring-time arouse
 The slumbering leaf —
 The newly-born leaf.

And I, in my grief,
Shall know no relief
Till the beautiful face
And ineffable grace
Of my ladye of grace

Come back and awake
The leaves in my breast,
Wake my love and my sighs
From their opiate rest,
And, like spring-weather, make
My loving soul rise,
Like a blossom awake
And bloom out of my eyes.

NON SUPRA CREPIDAM.

OF all your witching charms, my fair,
I cannot think of one so sweet,
Of none so perfect, none so rare,
Nor half so dainty as your feet.

Have I not held them in my hand,
And kissed them like a kneeling slave,
And learned their very music and
Their echoes on the marble pave ?

O, how help loving them the best ! —
For have they not, love's eager feet,
Brought you, my darling, to my breast,
And made my wanting life complete !

My heart has leaped to see them near,
Like sunrise leading in the light, —
And sunk to have them disappear,
And leave me wildered in the night.

My love, such pagan-worship, I
Dare not your face divine to meet,
But am content, with downcast eye,
Only to idolize your feet !

I would the shoes I give were gold,
To be as precious as your feet!
Would they were little clouds to hold
Dainties than clouds more light and fleet.

Yet these will mind you morn and night
Of one who loves you night and day
To me they 'll bring your every flight,
But from me turn you not away.

Then wear them, darling, for my sake,
And keep them when they serve no more
For in their depths my heart they take
And I have kissed them o'er and o'er

So that your feet will always tread
Upon the roses of a heart of love
While kisses, like the morning, shed
Their cooling dews your steps above.

AT THE PIANO.

THIS rosy little laughing girl of ours,
As happy as the daughter of a king,
Whose life is but the tender life of flowers,
Is just now learning how to play and sing.

The little thing knows not how poor are we;
Her guiltless heart dreams not the shame we
bear;

The wealth of perfect joyousness has she,
The perfect spotlessness that angels wear.

Her mother and myself behind her stand
To-night, while she sings simple melodies,
And smile to see her lift her little hand
And barely stretch her fingers o'er the keys.

She sits so high, her nervous little feet
In mid-air dangle, dancing up and down;
She shrugs her soft, bare shoulders, where they
meet
The golden clusters tumbling from her crown,

Her little fingers stumble as they fly;
Her voice now breaks, is thin and shrill anon,
But we both love her so, my sweet and I,
There's not a note we do not dote upon.

I mark me rings and bracelets cheap as air
Upon our darling, poor, but woman true;
Her mother needs must fondle with her hair, —
To vent her love, bend down and kiss it too.

The sunbeams fall and make its gold more gold:
The child sings glad: I seek its mother's
eyes,
And find, I know not how, her hand I hold,
And sad tears fall, while sadder thoughts
arise.

We weep, and almost wish the child would die:
We both have sinned so much and suffered so,
We fain would have her taken to the sky,
And only childhood's innocence know.

D O U B T.

'TIS night! 'Tis night!
The air is soft, and the stars are out,
But oh! my heart, it is not light;
On it there broods the shadow of doubt: —

A doubt of friends! —
Of what the world holds high and dear! —
Of Life's great purposes and ends; —
Of all we cherish, hope, or fear!

THE AMPHITHEATRE — OPERA NIGHT.

(STUDENS LOQUITUR.)

THE very best place in the house, you see!
Like an oriole up in the top of a tree,
We have the whole scene in a bird's-eye view;
Besides, the sound rises and now we can hear
Every note that is sung, distinct and clear;
And the voices blend more sweetly, too,
By the time they have flown
To this giddisome height;
And they come with a tone
That is full of delight,
But is lost to the folk that are sitting below:
And some of the very best fellows I know,
With thousands a year,
You will see sitting here;
For all the best judges of music say
That for them any day
They rather would pay
A superior price, or equal at least,
To that of the seats below,
And sit of their choice
At the top of the house where the charm of the
voice
And the sweetness and grace of the melody's
flow
Are vastly increased

By the distance they go.

What a crowd in the top of the house there is!
Wreathed in the haze of the harmonies,
Unshorn and unshaved, ungloved and undressed!

There are faces of black outshining the rest,
And broadcloth and rags,
And students and hags,
And teacher and ruffian, clerk and divine,
And men in the loafing and stealing line,
The clown from the country, the man of the town,

The aristocrats that are broken down,
Chaps, that are short in the way of cash,
Chaps, that are prudent in spending their trash,
Foreigners, too,
Of every hue,
That teach the fine arts and have little to do,
And treasureless swells, who have nothing except
The beard they have dyed and the clothes that they owe for,

Yet handle their glasses in manner adept,
And look down on the crowds with an exquisite air,

And go for as much as they are able to go for,—
Poor dogs ! that more readily borrow than lend,
And have nothing to eat, but abundance to wear,—

And the roughs, and the newspaper boys, and
the Jews,
And the feller set up, and the feller that chews,
And the odds and the ends all hither ascend,
And, on terms of equality, mingle and blend.

They hiss and encore
And yell and call for
The singers again, with a perfect *furor*.
Oh! the life of the house is here,
And the closeness and heat of the atmosphere;
And there is nothing to fear
In the way of your dress
Or the joy you express,
For the gallery levels us all;
And nobody cares what you do or you say,
If your hat does n't get in Secundus' way,
Or you don't hap to be inconveniently tall.

No formality needed,
No etiquette heeded,
But the man on your right with a smirk or a
bow,
Would like it if you would allow
Him the use of your glass,
Which you generously pass,
And thus help to supply
His eye and the eye

Of his neighbor close by
With the pleasure of bringing the debutante
nigh.

Besides, in the passages fine,
When the music is full and divine,
And your ears are strained to gather it all,
Your friend with a nod that is conscious and
wise,

Takes leave by a nudge your attention to call
To the charms of the song, and winks with his
eyes,

And tells you that this is the kind
Of music that suits his critical mind.
And the man in the seat that is back of your
own,

When the singing is sweetest,
And the melody fleetest,
Is free to tell, in an under tone,
His friend what the scene
Is intended to mean,
And comments at large on the worth of the air,
And the relative merits of singers who bear
Their various parts in the play;
And says that his friend should have just heard
the way

That somebody carried that part in his day.
And remarks that the tones of the tenor to-night

Are a little too rough, or a little too light,
And swears that the bass is all out of the key,
And *he* never could see
What use there could be
In bringing a broken down voice of that age
To carry its role on the opera-stage!

Yes! the very best place in the house for me;
For here I look down from my eyry and see
The glory of wealth and the splendor of dress,—
See a wildering maze of loveliness,
An agitate ocean of colors and hues,
The purest of white and the tenderest blues,
And the brightest of red like flames on the
 sea;
There are glittering pearls in many a tress,
And faces as lovely as faces can be,
And lips that are saying the sweetest of words
In tones as melodious as warbling of birds.

And eyes are glowing as bright and as clear
As the sparkling lights of the chandelier,
And the beautiful scene is like fairy land,
While the rustling of fans in a lady's hand,
Diffusing an orient scent in the air,
And the murmur of whispers from everywhere,
And the sighing of silks come faintly and bear
A trace of the sweets that float lavishly there.

Like a basket of flowers, of various hues,
Where the white and the green and the crimson confuse,
And the fuschia hangs with the lil of the vale,
And candid japonicas kiss the red rose
And the hyacinth blue and the dahlia pale
In exquisite blendings of color repose,
While bright the mingled dyes between
Peers forth the graceful leaf of myrtle green.

And all the long hours in the glare of the light,
Bent over the colors that dazzle the sight,
In the rush of sweet murmurs that climb to
our height,
We dream and dream as if lost by a spell,
And wish we were all that now we are not,
That some other fortune than ours were our lot,
That other than those we know loved us right
well.
That fairer than those we know looked in our
face
And charmed us indeed with the beauty and
grace
That we fancy are rife in this many-hued place;
While all the sweet hour our souls are uplift,
And our spirits are drowned in the music we
hear,
And our hearts, like a rudderless boat, are adrift

On the billows of song rolling light on the ear; —
While the swell of the orchestra, heavy and
 grand,
And the swell of the chorus surge up to the sky,
And ringing above them, o'erriding them high,
And leading the song in a ringing command,
Come the notes of the singer, superb and
 supreme,
And the harmony blends in a perfected stream.

Or Maude and Alaide, in the sweetest of notes
In the tenderest tones from the tuneliest throats,
To the sound of the reed or the warbling of flute,
Unite in a song that is soft as a lute:
And the top of the house is still unto death,
And we bend as in silence, scarce drawing our
 breath,
Lest we break the dear charm that is bearing
 us far
To lands where the fountains of ecstasy are.

RESIGNATION.

THE other day, I chanced to meet
A shabby fellow on the street.

A shabby fellow, yet his dress
Was aimed at gentlemanliness.

His rim was bent, his boots were torn,
His coat was brushed, but sadly worn.

His eyes were overworked and red,
And rusty ringlets graced his head.

He had a fawning way and air,
And ran his fingers through his hair

Like one whom none did love or know,
Who looked above but stood below.

And I had known him long before,
And heard his whinings o'er and o'er —

His dictum, that the world denies
To nameless worth its well-earned prize.

But now he brightened up, and spoke
More in the way of other folk.

“ I’ve tried my muse a thousand times ;
I’ve writ an endless mass of rhymes :

“ The thought is always clear and fine,
I feel the fire and glow divine ;

“ But when I seize the rapid stile,
Beetling my pregnant brows meanwhile,

“ The faint expression falls below
Th’ imagination’s wondrous flow,

“ The current of my singing tends
Only to reach my finger ends.

“ And what I think and what I say
Are much unlike as night and day.

“ I long was puzzled at the fact
That some essential point I lacked ;

“ That every throb and every flame,
When once outwrit, so faint became,

“ That every verse I toiled to trace
Turned out, in reading, common-place,

“ That such a falling-off was made
From what I thought to what I said.

- “Because my singing wasn’t sweeter,
I blamed the various kinds of metre;
- “Because my verse rushed rough along,
I said the thought was wild and strong ;
- “Because ’twas weak and innocent,
I said that such is sentiment ;
- “Because the words seemed empty stuff,
I said they were not wrought enough.
- “’Tis sweet at last to know the truth,
It brings me rest, ’twill bring me ruth ;
- “It is, though late I come to know it,
I was not cut out for a poet.”
-

ALLAN.

A HAPPY New Year, guid auld frien’ !
May joys, henceforth, untauld descen’
(I’ll na say joys that hae na en’,
For sic hap rarely)
Upo’ your head an’ fortune sen’
Her favors fairly.

I ken your proud heart doth na deign
To burden ithers wi' your pain,
An' sae to your ain breast 'tis ta'en,
An' there ye wear it,
Tho', spite your fause mirth, it is plain
'Tis hard to bear it.

Wad, Allan, I had mair for ye
Than sic puir lines as thae frae me ; —
I ken fu' weel ye hate to see
A useless prater ; —
But a' my sympathy I gie, —
Ye'll find na greater.

But, mon, be bauld o' heart an' gay,
An' let the warld gang on its way,
Ye're guid for mony a future day,
An' life's afore ye ;
Ye yet shall conquer, ere the gray
O' age fa' ower ye.

What tho' the wild, uncanny fire
Doth vent on ye its fitfu' ire,
Doth blast your aims frae base to spire
In fearfu' pleasure,
An' tak' — what baser men desire —
Your warly treasure ;

It canna tak awa' frae ye
The wealth that luve an' frien'ship gi'e,
Na steal the hearts to whilk ye flee
 To find protection,
Na bring ane tear-drop frae your e'e
 For lost affection.

The frien's ye luve, wha ken ye weel,
It ne'er can sever, ne'er dispel ;
It's rage, however, wild an' fell,
 Can reach them never;
In them doth your true riches dwell,
 Na lost forever —

A treasure, fire na storm shall start —
A wark o' nature na o' art —
A union strang o' heart to heart
 (There's nae sic ither)
Where frien's stick closer, tho' apart,
 Than e'en a brither.

An' min' ye, in their heart ye hae
A place, whilk ye shall haud for aye ;
Come grief or gladness, sad or gay,
 'Twill e'er be near ye
In time o' life to help, in day
 O' death to cheer ye.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

WELL, as to the tale I intended to tell: —
There once was a boy who was carrying a
pail
Of hens' eggs or ducks' eggs to market for sale:
The chill Christmas winds round his path 'gan
to wail,
And the cold would have snapped off a ten-
penny nail :
The still, icy freezing was worse than a gale,
And made the boy's jacket of little avail:
His earlaps grew redder, and then they grew pale,
And his fingers grew numb as they clung round
the bail;
Till the pain, at first stinging, grew easy and
stale,
And his eyes 'gan to close as his strength 'gan
to fail,
And he lay fast asleep in the spot where he fell.

And this was his dream,—for his mind was
awake, —
That he went on his way to the shore of a lake,
Where he came pretty near stepping plump on
a snake;
And the fright he received gave his hand such
a shake

He let the pail fall and he let his eggs break;
But while the poor boy made a woful ado,
Mirabile Dictu! he had such a view
You'd scarcely believe it, if told it were true,—
There was n't an egg but was broken in two,
And out from the shell there not only peeped
through
But really stalked forth, as if 't want nothin' new,
The prettiest wee duckling that ever drank dew;
And, what is more wondrous, it grew and it
grew,
In the twink of an eye, to the size of an ewe!

And each had a ring of gold crowning its head,
And its plumage was soft as a new feather bed,
And it stepped with a sort of imperial tread,
And it shone in the sunlight in purple and red,
Its form swelling plump, just as though it were
fed

On the fat of the land ever since it was born.
And, after a sort of proud ejaculation,
Each trod with a dignified precipitation,
And, once in the water, began navigation;
And there seemed in the thing to be some
preparation,
For, without saying how (as you know the
relation
Of things in a dream hasn't much of causation),
There came a new wonder the scene to adorn.

There rose to the surface the prettiest sight —
In the way of a boat, that came ever to light ;
Its fashion was foreign, its sides were all bright
With a sort of gold sheathing that kept it air-
tight:

It shone in the daytime like flames in the night;
And one little seat there was cushioned all right
For a feller the size of our own little wight:
It lay on the wave with the grace of a shell;
It glittered and rocked on the lake's easy swell,
And the ripples it struck were like chimes of a
bell:

It was n't so small, to be sure, as they tell
Was the chariot Mab loved to ride in so well,
Yet its length could have barely exceeded an
ell.

And its soft, silken sails were shedding perfume;
And roses were in it all fragrant with bloom,—
And ready for use was the richest costume

That ever a poor boy had put on his back.

And a little black driver sat stuck on the prow,
Who harnessed the ducks, tho' I cannot tell how,
And winked at our hero, and made him a bow,
And told him the princess of Anabangtow,
With her compliments, asked if he would n't
allow

Her the joy of a call, — if agreeable, now:

She'd be glad to present him a gem or a cow,
And had sent him her yacht, in the place of a
hack.

The sunlight came down with a beautiful sheen ;
The hill-sides were robed in the softest of green,
And shadows still richer were lying between ;
And nothing but beauty was over the scene,

And odorous breezes blew out of the West,
And lilies were bordering the rim of the shore,
And the sea was as smooth as a wide silver floor,
And, far in the distance, the clouds floated o'er

The blue mountain tops fading out at their
crest;

And the sky had a sort of luxurious glow
That made life more rapt'rously rich in its flow;
And the shadows and fragrance and breeze
sighing low,

And the sunlight and water such magic did
throw,

That the scene seemed to spring from some
fairy's behest.

Yet, strange though it seem at a moment like
this,

His mother was with him in midst of his bliss,
And told him be sure, as she gave him a kiss,

To take off his cap when he came to the queen ;

And, what is the strange thing, she bundled his
face

With a wrapper that left but a small breathing
place

And proceeded his hands and his head to encase
In fox-skins and bear skins he mustn't unlace,
For fear the cold breezes might get in
between.

Yet, though it was warm as the Fourth of July,
He didn't feel heated, he didn't know why,
But sat as untroubled as you'd sit or I,
And told the black driver to whip up the nigh, —

He meant the nigh duck that was tied to his
team, —

And though I can't tell you what wonders he
saw,

Still the ducks in the water continued to draw,
And he found a few sweetmeats to put in his
maw,

A cruller, or something of that kind, to gnaw,
And a little gold saucer of strawberries and
cream.

And still were the waters all placid and blue;
And still the far mountain-tops swam in the dew;
And he saw the quick fishes the current glide
thro';

And he felt the full sweets of a dreamy
sensation.

His mind was as idle as sunbeams asleep,
His head was as void as the water was deep,
He had nothing to do, or to think, or to reap,
But his soul, like a shallop tied fast to a keep,
Was rocked on the breast of a soft titillation.

And he dreamed that the motion so lulled him
to rest,
That his head declined gradually down to his
breast;

And whether he went to the east or the west
He cared not a copper, so soft was he pressed
In the pillows of luxury, where he was bound;
You may think then it vexed him to meet with
a shock,

As if his fine dory had hit on a rock
With a jar like the fall of a weight of a clock,
For he couldn't believe he had got into dock;
And he vowed he would give his black pilot a
knock,

And tell him his head was hewed out of a block,
If he didn't know better than run one
aground!

But what did he think when he opened his eyes,
And saw, in the midst of his awe and surprise,

That his ducks and his dory had gone to the skies?
While two or three serving men bade him arise
And seized him, one one arm, and 'nother the
other,
And hurried him into a palace close by,
Where the princess was placed with a glass to
her eye,
Awaiting his coming,—her courtiers all nigh!
And he dreamed that she gazed on his face
with a sigh,
And bewailed as she would were he going to die;
And, as he looked closer, what should he espy
But the fact that the princess was just his
own mother!

And he woke from his dream with a horrible
pain:
The beautiful lake scene came never again;
But his father at work with his might and his
main,
Was rubbing his limbs down to get up an
action:
His mother indeed was dissolving in tears
Lest the joy of her life and the pride of her
years,
Whom they'd found by the way, frozen stiff in
the ears,
Should die and leave her in a state of dis-
traction.

But, by rubbing him well, and by tenderest care,
By blankets and coverlets, steam and hot air,
And a dose of the doctor's, who chanced to be
there,

The boy before springtime got out to his play:
But the dream that he had he forgot nevermore,
Nor the lilies that fragrantly waved by the
shore,

Nor the clouds that lay resting the mountain
tops o'er,

Nor the rich velvet shadows the valley sides
wore,

Nor the sighs that the western wind tenderly
bore;

Still, the eggs that he broke, he could never
restore,

And his limbs have inclined ever since to be
sore,

And he feels the cold quicker than ever before.

And the rheumaties plague him e'en down to
this day.

"ADA! SOLE DAUGHTER."

A FORTNIGHT old — God give it thousands
more —

A wee, round baby face just turned to shape,
And cheek and chin with dimples dented o'er,
And moist blue eyes, whence only smiles es-
cape,
A mimic now of life, the little ape !

Ah, man, your sweetest joy, your deepest woe,—
Lie in the dimples of that cheek and chin ;
And hopes, that farther than your own life go,
Are kindling from the spark that glows with-
in
That totally depraved dot of sin.

See, what quick changes from its birth arise !
It puts us all a generation on,
And maketh aunts and cousins thick as flies:
Our light and fire of youth are quenched and
gone
Since this new luminary 'gan to dawn.

Think, sir, though,— thanks unto your virile
beard,—

It won't vex you as 'twill your better half,
Think how, before e'en infancy is cleared,

Instead of crowing glibly with a laugh,
The imp will oftener bellow like a calf :

And how your book by day, your dreams at night
Must yield their place when darling isn't well,
While its worn mother thinks it isn't right
That she bear all the load, and cannot tell
Why you can't hold the little dear a spell.

Think how, O man, only a few years gone,
'Twill wear out shoes at toe, and spoil its
gown,
Get lost, or bruised, run o'er, or trampled on,
And pick up all the naughty words in town,
And learn the froward ways and airs that
crown

So soon the education of those years :
And then will come the fledgling's earliest
flights
Into the world of fashion and of tears,
Into the world of love, display, and nights,
Where danger lurks and vanity delights.

What scenes, when down your bank account she
draws !
What dire expense, what jaunts o'er land and
sea!

Still, on your hands, what parents' woe because
She gets entangled so imprudently,
And spurns, or fails to catch, the proper he !

Of course, there'll be a day, when some good
man,

With money in his purse or high of birth,
Shall give the little maid a ring or fan,
And take her home for whatso'er she's worth,
And she, poor girl, thus finds the end of earth.

Yet all these growing years, I can't deny,
The child will be a fond and dear delight ;
The changes of its life, as time goes by,
Its likes and loves, its trials of its might,
Its arms about your neck to kiss good-night,

Its love of you, its faith in what you seem,
Its growing beauty and its growing sense,
Its stores of youth that your lost youth re-
deem,

Its woman's heart at length and influence
Will be your sweet and perfect recompense.

NEBULAE.

THE clock in the belfry is striking again,
The wind from the sea is upbringing the
mist ;

Did you not promise me, darling, at ten,
You at your window would bide me a tryst.

As true to my post as a time-telling star,
I am waiting, love, just where I promised to
be ;

You will know it is I by my blazing cigar
Through the leaves that o'erspread their concealment for me.

I am getting impatient here, waiting all night ;
I am puffing great clouds from my lips to the
sky ;

But the house is still frowning and dark to my
sight,

Like a castle of old with its battlements high.

But, look up at the light bursting into the night!

Her window is up and my darling is there ;
Like an angel she stands in her raiment of
white,

With a ripple of gold floating down on her
air.

Ah, me! seeing nothing but her, it meseems
That the walls of the house fade away from
my sight,
While my love is still there, like a creature of
dreams,
Like a jewel let down through the folds of
the night.

Like a picture of faith, like a glorified saint,
In luminous whiteness she buoys in the air ;
The clouds from my lips roll beneath her, and
faint
With the burden of incense and worship they
hear.

Blest vision of light on the night's dusky wing,
Lie down on the pillows of smoke that arise!
Round your feet let them gather, and feather-
like, bring
You down to my arms like a gift from the
skies.

They are calling you back from the window, my
gem ;
Beware, lest they guess what you linger to
see!
Your false lips impatiently answer to them ; —
I know your true heart is communing with me.

Alas! she has vanished — the curtains are
drawn ;

The walls frown aloft like a castle of old ;
Darkness is now where a moment ago
Were the vision of white and the ripples of
gold.

Ah, now let me sleep, for in dreams you are
mine,

There our hearts from each other no longer
are riven,
But our lives and our loves are as true and
divine,
As the innocent stars that allure us to heaven.

Oh, beautiful woman! the world does you ill :

You can never escape from the stains it has
cast ;
And can I, though I love you and worship you
still,
Forget them, alas! though forgiven and past?

Oh, would you had always and only been mine,
Misled by no false friends, nor hunted by
foes;

Your sweet woman's nature, born almost divine,
Would have perfectly oped from the bud to
the rose.

And so, my soul's longing is always the same,
That with you from the mists I could fly to
the skies,
Lift you out of the world and its envy and
shame,
Where its memories even could never arise.

Yes, love! like the smoke from my blazing
cigar,
I fancy us rising together on high,
And mingling our lives, made as pure as a star.
And floating forever alone in the sky.

DEDICATION HYMN.

ALMIGHTY King of Kings,
Whom all creation sings,
In endless praise!
Ruler of earth and sea!
Our Hope! our Mystery!
Our only Truth, to Thee
This house we raise.

Oh, may Thy blessing fall
This day upon us all
And evermore!
Hence shall our songs arise,
Our prayers hence mount the skies,—
An humble sacrifice
Thy throne before.

Here may the mourner's grief,
His tears find sweet relief!

Be Thou his trust!

Here may we know Thy will,
Here find through joy and ill,
An arm to lean on till
We fall to dust.

Here learn to live in Thee,
Learn to forgive, as we
Would be forgiven.
To walk day after day
The straight, though narrow way,
That thus our spirits may
Be fit for Heaven.

THE OLD SONGS.

MY brother, Sarah, Ruth, and I
Together sang in days gone by.

The songs we sang were few and plain;
We sang them o'er and o'er again.

'Twas long ago, and now are we
Scattered as far as we can be.

At times howe'er we meet, and then
We sing the old songs o'er again.

Our voices easily unite
Because our hearts are tuned aright;

They all in rounded concord blend
And volume to each other lend.

The dear old songs now always bring
A rush of feeling while we sing.

They tell of other years and days
When we were walking rural ways ;

Of moonlit hour and serenade ;
And standing in the maple shade ;

Of sweet, sweet home, and village dear,
And pleasant seasons of the year ;

Of those we loved in olden time,
Through summer light and winter rime ;

Of fears and tears and hopes and sighs,
Which in the breast no longer rise,

Which now we scarce can comprehend —
Nay, wonder, while our voices blend,

If just those loves and hopes and sighs,
That now we think could never rise,

Did drive us like a ship at sea
And toss our lives so fitfully! —

If we indeed, in other days,
Were they who sang these simple lays! —

If those love-lighted eyes, where ruth
E'en then subdued the glow of youth,

Or that fair face 'neath golden tress,
That blue-eyed cloud of loveliness,

Who cried in pain and laughed in glee,
Her soul as full as soul could be —

If they are these, who now conceal
The unspoken weariness they feel!

And so we ponder as we sing,
That old-time world remembering;

And, when the last sweet chord has died,
We sit in silence side by side;

Our hearts are full to running o'er
With rain-drops from the skies of yore;

And none dares speak, but silent all,
We almost hear the shadows fall;

And while the twilight deepens fast,
As dim and sombre as the past,

Like souls revisiting the spheres,
Come back again the buried years,

And in their light, but not as then,
We live their seasons o'er again,

Fill closing round our downcast eyes
We feel the blinding tear-mists rise.

The olden songs, the simple lays,
Full of the breath of other days,

With dear associations rife,
Have come to be a part of life ;

And though they fill our hearts with pain,
We sing them o'er and o'er again.

LIMITATION.

I WALK amid a wilderness
Of hurrying forms and eager feet,
And now and then a hand I press,
Or smile to nods from those I meet.

And yet I am not here, but far,
My mind is not of forms and flesh;
My heart is where the breezes are,
As free from weight, as free from mesh.

My soul is where the breezes are;
Nay, rides as fast as rolls the sea,
Outruns the wind, and striketh star,
And whirleth through immensity.

It is not with me on the earth,
It sees not those who pass me by,
But proudly mindful of its birth
It springeth birdlike to the sky.

DAFT!

OH! whither is gone
My radiant bride!
She was lying at dawn
Asleep at my side,—
She was floating last night
With a fairy-like air,
So pretty in white,
With a rose in her hair:
While her dark hazel eye,—
Where the white of her dress
Made a darker hue lie,—
And her rare loveliness

Made me dizzy and wild,
Filled the air with perfume,
As she glided and smiled
Like a sylph in the room.

All through the long night,
In the hush of her rest,
She was lying in white,
Lovingly pressed;
The moon, riding by,
Stole close to my bride,
And glad to be nigh,
Fell asleep at her side;
While it pillowed its beams
In her dark-floating hair,
As she lay in her dreams
So exceedingly fair.
Oh, the dark and the white,
Oh, the loveliness rare
Of her face half in sight
Through her dark flowing hair
Breathing so lightly,
My beautiful bride,
And nestling so slightly
There at my side!

Where is she hidden?
Oh, why does she stay?



The moon has long ridden
On its journey away.
Oh, no! you deceive me, —
My Lule is not dead!
Why will you grieve me!
Where has she fled?
No! not a long year
Since the sweet eventide,
When my beautiful dear
Lay down at my side!
'Twas only this dawn
That here at my breast,
When first the sun shone,
She awoke from her rest
With a smile that was sweet
As the heart of a rose,
Moving her feet
From their sculptured repose,—
Her feet like the feet
Of a statue in white
Of a barefooted girl,—
Rounded and slight
And tralucent as pearl.

She's testing the strength
Of the love I professed,
And, sated at length,
Will come back to her nest ;

Will come and lie down,
Beside me to rest,
And will laugh while I frown
At her running away,—
Ah! the trick the dear brownie
She is trying to play!

She has hid, with the day,
Far down in the west,—
A beautiful ray
Surpassing the rest.
For none is so fair,
So rare is there none,
Of all the rays there
Making the splendor,
Of all the rays there
That radiantly render
Their dues to the sun!
She will spring from the east
To-morrow at dawn,
As early this morn,
When slumber had ceased,
She rose from her bed :
She will come to me, led
By the earliest ray
That springeth away,—
And will wake me from rest,—
So pretty in white,—

And come back to my breast
Like a dream in the night, —
And will tell me the mirth
Of her ride in the night,
When she circled the earth
On the wings of the light.

She is hid in a cloud,
And is floating in dreams,
Where the ether is ploughed
In rippleless streams,
Mingling her hair
With the fringe of the cloud,
Celestially fair
In her delicate shroud,
Peering over its edge,
And laughing to see
How I cling to the pledge
She has broken with me.
She heareth the flow
Of harmonies rare,
And looks down through the air
On the great globe below;
And o'erfloating it sleeps
As she slumbered last night,
While in armor of light
Each trusty star keeps
Its watch while she sleeps.

Ah, hush! for I hear
Her voice in the air
Breathing low in my ear!
I know she is there!
I know she is near!
For I feel her dark hair,
When the wind blows it by
Sprinkle my cheek.
She is hovering nigh
Playing a freak,
Subtle and coy,—
Oh, flit not away!
Hither, sweet joy!
Why do you stay,
My radiant bride?
Dear little wren,
Why not at my side
Come and slumber again!

MY OLD VIOLIN.

WHILE evening's dim folds round my
gather fast,
And the chill breezes chant a low moan,
My fancy is busy with scenes of the past
As I sit by my fireside alone.

The group that once cheered me affection re-
calls;

Beloved ones, I ask, where are they?

My own voice comes back from the echoing
walls,

And sadly repeats, *Where are they?*

A sound like a serenade, plaintive and sweet,

An almost inaudible strain,

Now rises and swells into tones more complete,

Now sinks away softly again.

It seems like the spirit of many a lay —

A voice from the past — that I hear,

In lingering cadences dying away,

On memory's faltering ear.

Or the music of dreams, in the stillness of night,

By some spirit guardian sung ; —

'Tis the air through the cracks, and the vibra-
tions slight

Of my old violin, all unstrung.

How many a cherished remembrance it brings

Of dear friends and pastimes of yore !

A sorrowful touch on the heart's shattered
strings,

That soon will respond nevermore !

THE MOUNTAINS OF MAINE.

I NE 'ER shall forget, when returning one day
To my home mid the mountains of Maine,—
When the summer was nigh, and the fair hand
of May

Was bedecking the country again, —
What a thrill of delight, inexpressibly sweet,
I felt while extending my gaze
O'er the scenes, unforgotten, where often my
feet
Had rambled in earlier days.

What a welcoming look I imagined I found
In the ragged old mountains in view,
In the quick-flowing streams and the hill-tops
around,

And the fields clothed in summer's bright hue.
How the full, honest breeze, I had tasted so oft,
With health and with vigor o'erladen,
Swept over my cheek with a touch that was soft
As the smooth, velvet hand of a maiden.

My soul swelled with joy, springing up to the
skies,

With the view that was spread out before it,
Then, deeper emotions beginning to rise,
A feeling of sadness came o'er it ;

For I felt from these scenes of my boyhood
around me, —

The hillside, the grove, and the plain, —
I must part and dissever the ties that had bound
me

So long to the mountains of Maine.

T R U S T.

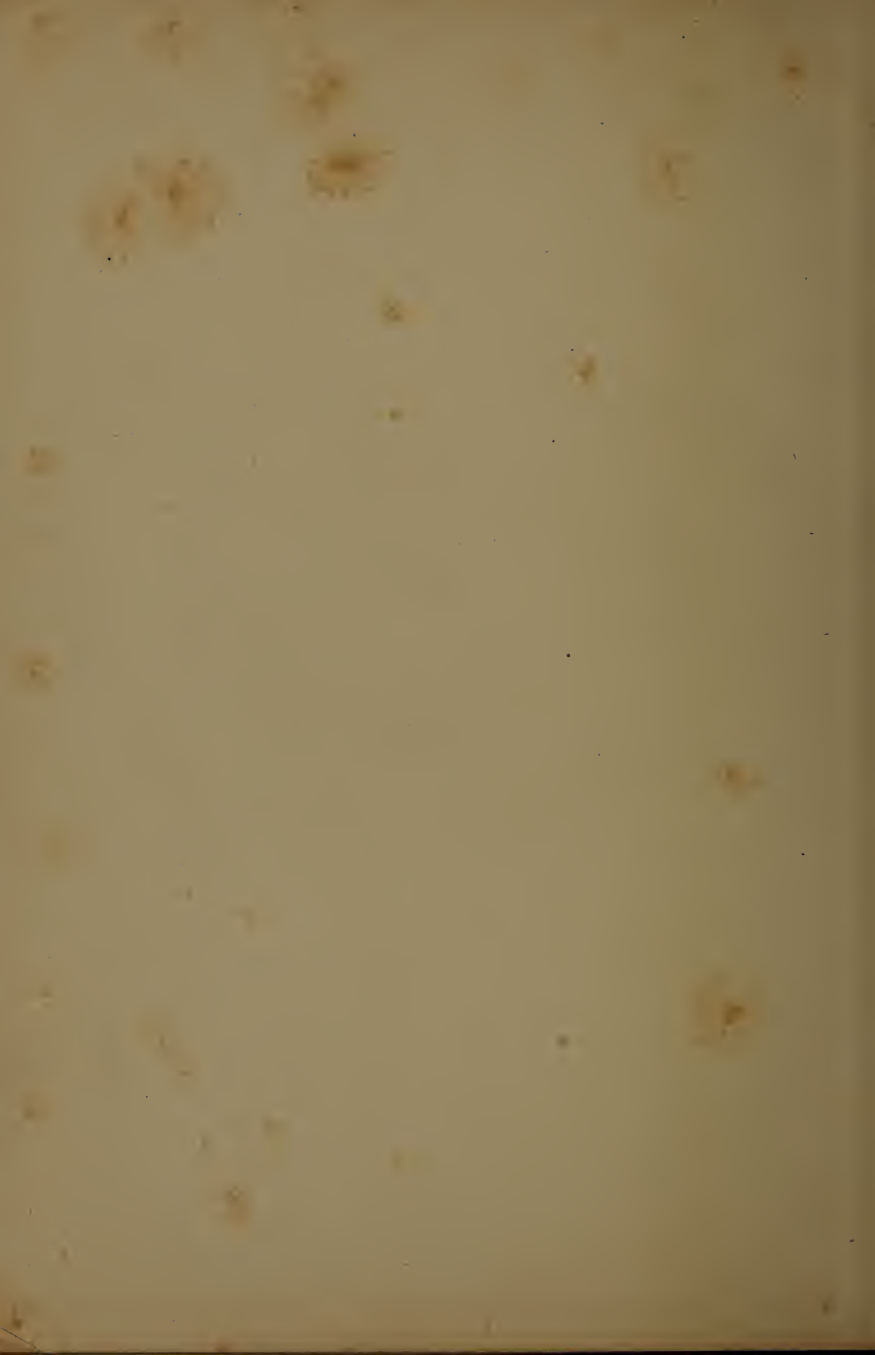
O H, friend of mine, oh, love divine!
My heart this offering pays to thine:
It has no fears that one so dear

And loved so well, will scorn or spurn it;
That one who knows my life and throws
Her sweetness o'er its plain repose,
Will fail to take the gift I make,
And if it hath a charm, discern it.

E'en as a child, though he be dear
To no one else in all the sphere,
Yet hath at night one rich delight —

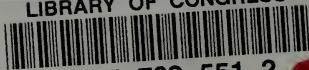
One mother's face to bend above him,
And ever knows he may repose
In one true heart his weal and woes;
And hath the bliss of one fond kiss,
The whole of one fond soul to love him —
If only on e, yet one to love him:

So, Psyche, mine, my love divine,
Thy loving eyes must image mine,
And in their deep must always keep
 A fount of tenderness to bless me;
For while they still with fondness fill,
The world may say me well or ill;
But if on mine no more they shine,
 The merest frown will overpress me —
 The world will crush and overpress me.



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